



By:
Ike Adams

It is "almost heaven" as John Denver promised in a song where the chorus went, "Country roads take me home to the place I belong. West Virginia, Mountain Mama, take me home country roads."

I have no relatives in West Virginia, but I love the splendid scenery, especially the parts that are unspoiled by mountaintop removal at the expense of Mother Earth, and while it can sometimes take a bit, I have tremendous respect for the in-your-face attitude that native West Virginians take to anybody from outside the state boundaries who want to offer them free advice.

Last weekend I traveled to Pipestem State Resort, near Beckley, halfway between Hinton and Princeton on highway 20 and situated high on a mountaintop overlooking the deep canyon through which the Bluestone River weaves a blue and white-lace thread of rushing stream, far below but perfectly visible from balconies at the park's lodge.

Pipestem is perfectly unpretentious. Clean as a whistle and secluded where deer and wild turkey by the hundreds have rights of way across the roads and where a walk on any trail will introduce you to squirrels, rabbits, coons, woodpeckers, and songbirds galore who seem oblivious to your presence. Yet never, in my life, was so many deer in one place and they are remarkably fat and healthy.

The park probably covers a couple thousand acres—maybe more—and includes an 18 hole golf course, riding stables, indoor and outdoor pools, a spa, tennis and basketball courts, a lake that stretches a mile or so, and a few more. You can see four and you peddle them like a bike

to make the prop turn) for rent and free fishing, and balconies on every room with ten-to-four views of the mountains and the afore-mentioned Bluestone river. Two restaurants inside the 7-story lodge, a fire room, huge fireplace to sit around on the ground floor. Four bucks gets you a half mile sky-tram ride down to the river (and back up) where there's another restaurant and gift shop featuring high quality crafts. In fact, the ride down is free, but you have to pay, and you will or wish you had, to ride back up.

A double room with two queen size beds is about 80 bucks a night with taxes. Food prices comparable to what you'd pay at a decent diner off the interstate. 18 holes of golf with a cart on a well kept and challenging course out there among the deer and turkeys and groundhogs for about 20 bucks. It's an everyman place to go and, if it is in update, New York it would cost you a thousand bucks a day and the amenities would not be so nice.

Not a person on the staff who doesn't seem to love his or her job and be glad to have it. (I was there in '99 and the front desk staff had not changed by a single person.) Almost Heaven indeed.

On the way home we took the backroads over through the New River Gorge and later got off the interstate (I-64) to see Grandview National Park and a spectacular view (and tons more) of the Gorge, all free at Grandview W.V. Finally, between Charleston and Huntington we exited again where Loretta had found a brochure about Hurricane, West Virginia and we wound up spending the evening in a Super 8 and most of the next day, visiting shops in a little historic district of Hurri-

cane which is easily the cleanest small town I've ever seen in central Appalachia and arguably the most interesting. It's at exit 34 on 64 and if you are ever traveling through West Virginia, and you get of the interstate and go to downtown Hurricane, you'll find yourself taking the night too. I'm going back to stay longer.

We stopped in Milton too, Exit 29 off 64 because everybody we ran into in Hurricane insisted we had to see the Illesko Glass Factory where the workers still use the same technology to hand-blow and fire exquisite glass bowls, containers, vases, and decorative pieces that was in use before 1900. We were there until quitting time. No charge to stand behind the artisans at a fragile guardrail and watch them at work if you can stand the heat. Few shows on Broadway are so well choreographed as these several dozen fellows going about their work. The show is free and you can stay as long as you like because they know you will be buying something in the showroom downstairs.

before you leave. On the other hand, you will never forget your trip to this little factory.

And finally, you leave Milton about 5 in the afternoon and drive through Huntington and hit the KY line at Ashland where you are greeted by the stench from the oil refinery and you think for sure, that this must be the way that Hell will smell. You go past the junction where US 23 intersects with I-64 and all of a sudden you see all the fast food wrappers and soft drink and beer and whiskey containers in the world suddenly piled alongside the highway and you wonder why, if West Virginia is so poor and underdeveloped too, you did not see all the garbage alongside their roads.

West Virginians may not have many prospects for prosperity—certainly no more than Kentucky—but they have pride in the place they live and it shows. It may not be Heaven, but it's a lot closer than Kentucky if cleaning up after yourself is worth a darn.

Our Readers Write

Dear Editor,
My name is Linda Kirby and I live in Barnett Trailer Park in Mt. Vernon. Sunday night, our neighbors were shooting firecrackers in your yard.

I got on the telephone and called. I also called Charlotte, the lady next door to us and told her who it was.

911 sent an officer down to the trailer. I think he was the older officer from Colorado that the mayor hired.

Well, we were babysitting my boyfriend's two grandbabies. I have witnesses that will state that he was there Sunday night with me and my daughter.

Anyway, the officer that came down heard us and talked to our neighbor (who pretended to be in bed at the time). The police officer called me over and talked to me. He made accusations as to why I called 911 in the first place. He said that my neighbor accused my boyfriend of being on his porch, which was not so. I don't know what his problem is anyway. We didn't do anything to them. But the officer that they sent down, stood in my face and wouldn't let me explain anything, or even try. All he said was if I have to come back down here, I'll have you put in jail, along with your boyfriend.

Now, we're the innocent part in all this. Another thing is, we got kicked out of the trailer park because of these people. We didn't have any fireworks in our trailer, nor have we ever had any. But the way they did it to our so-called friends and neighbors made it look like we had them. They would sit on our porch, while we were gone, and shoot fireworks.

I should file a complaint against them and the Mt. Vernon Police Dept. but it probably wouldn't do any good anyway because my son and I have

had problems with the mayor before.

Anyways, we are moving our trailer out of this trailer park as soon as I get enough money to do so.

But, I don't think that this police officer should have made accusations against us like that.

Thank you,
Linda Kirby

Dear Editor,

With all due respect to Miss Phillips, I believe it is not the time for a republican governor. I agree that Mr. Fletcher is a nice guy, but with this Republican president can we take the risk?

Miss Phillips complains of a little hanky panky in the capital parking lot, but remember Gov. Patton, like President Clinton, also took care of business.

And remember the huge Clinton surplus is now gone, squandered by a president that clearly stole the election. And the same political party that is now making California the laughing stock of the world, if not the entire universe.

Hard times are coming to Kentucky and we need Chandler to guide us through it. Someone that will not

(Cont. to A-9)



T.J.'s Journal

by Tonya J. Cook

Just the other day when I was watching the news, I learned that George Bush was asking approval for more funding from Congress for the on-going conflict in Iraq. I don't remember the exact dollar figure, but it amounted to a little more than seven hundred dollars per every man, woman, and child in the United States. What a staggering figure!

I don't know how many U.S. tax dollars have already been spent, but we sure don't have any proof of the Weapons of Mass Destruction, although I'm sure they are there, we just let Iraq have enough time to get the weapons out of the country before attacking. France or Germany might be a good place to look, but most logically, they are hidden in a neighboring Muslim country.

Also, the whole country of Iraq

has been torn apart by the U.S. and it's allied forces, but we've found no Saddam Hussein. It looks as if nobody knows his whereabouts but the network news, who periodically come up with a "recent" video of him. Miraculous, isn't it? The people at CNN should work for the FBI or the CIA.

But aren't we forgetting someone? It's our favorite terrorist, Osama bin Laden. He was the one who was behind the 9-11 attacks on the Pentagon and the World Trade Center. His name hasn't been mentioned but randomly the weeks. Do we just think he has reformed, or did we just give up searching for him so he can mastermind another 9-11 attack?

I don't think I'm getting my sixteen hundred dollars worth. I just

(Cont. to A-9)

Heart Attack Risk Factors

Presented by Dr. Kevin Rowe

The number of heart attacks has been declining since 1968, but remains the number one cause of death in Americans both male and female. By correcting a few of the risk factors that we have learned about, you can decrease your chances of ever having a heart attack.

There are three major factors that contribute to heart attacks, and each of them can be corrected. These five major risks are high blood pressure, high cholesterol, smoking, family history, and diabetes mellitus.

High blood pressure is easy to diagnose by simply having it checked. When it is elevated, it can be treated with changes in lifestyle, diet and medicines. In a few cases, high blood pressure is caused by a surgically correctable obstruction of the arteries to the kidneys or other lesions.

High cholesterol can be diagnosed by a simple blood test. To get the most accurate reading, it should be done in the morning after you have fasted for twelve hours. A low-cholesterol diet, exercise and medicines treat high levels. These measures usually lower the cholesterol nicely. Today's medicines are very effective.

The third factor is smoking. Nicotine is a stimulant and irritant for the heart and forces the heart to work harder. Smoking causes the blood to clot and plug the arteries more easily and the lung damage also creates more work for the heart. It is extremely important to stop smoking. There are now many aids to help you quit including stop-smoking classes and various medicines in the form of patches and pills. Together, these are fairly effective. Your doctor will help you control your dangers. Of course, we cannot change your family history.

Check your blood pressure and cholesterol, avoid smoking and exercise regularly. Doing these things will give you a healthier heart.



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